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Feb 25, 1999

PUB-NO: WO009908994A1
DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: WO 9908994 A1
TITLE: ANTI-CANCER COMPOUNDS

PUBN-DATE: February 25, 1999

INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME

AYLWARD, JAMES HARRISON

COUNTRY

AU

ASSIGNEE-INFORMATION:

NAME

PEPLIN PTY LTD
AYLWARD JAMES HARRISON

COUNTRY

AU
AU

APPL-NO: AU09800656

APPL-DATE: August 19, 1998

PRIORITY-DATA: AU00PO864097A (August 19, 1997)

INT-CL (IPC): C07 C 69/78; C07 C 69/533; C07 D 213/80; C07 G 17/00; A61 K 35/78; A61 K 31/455; A61 K 31/22; A61 K 31/325
EUR-CL (EPC): A61K035/78

ABSTRACT:

CHG DATE=19990905 STATUS=O>This invention relates to a compound or group of compounds present in an active principle derived from plants of the species Euphorbia peplus, Euphorbia hirta and Euphorbia drummondii, and to pharmaceutical compositions comprising these compounds. Extracts from these plants have been found to show selective cytotoxicity against several different cancer cell lines. The compounds are useful in effective treatment of cancers, particularly malignant melanomas and squamous cell carcinomas (SCCs). In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the compound is selected from the group consisting of jatrophanes, pepluanes, paralianes and ingenanes, and pharmaceutically-acceptable salts or esters thereof, and more particularly jatrophanes of Conformation II.

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